outbuildings. The hospital itself contains two free wards for the district, although much is lacking in modern equipment and drugs, and is under the direction of a medical officer, also subordinate to the qaimmaqam. There are several assistants, including a female nurse. Medical service in the district is in some disrepute, largely because of the character of the medical officer. Trained in Lebanon, he was characterized as having expensive cures for expensive patients, and none at all for others. A poor merchant who had taken his infant, afflicted with a rash, to this doctor was peremptorily told "to wash his baby more often," hardly a prescription of value as the child was bathed daily. In another case, a countryman with some complaint entered the doctor's office while the latter was in conference with a visitor to the district. When the countryman asked for the doctor, this person himself informed the sufferer that "the doctor was not there, and would not be expected for several days." Such unfortunate incidents, coupled with the fact that Arab physicians trained in the Middle East often use surgery as a panacea, have created a large body of adverse opinion.

Among a group of houses in the lower part of the town are to be found the courthouse and residence of the judge (arabic, hakim), the former a small, squarish mud-brick building of a single storey. When court is in session, there is usually a small number of villagers or townspeople squatting or leaning against its front wall, waiting to be called. The judge is the foremost of several

One curious fact gradually dawns on an American observer, 825
that almost no one is ever heard whistling, and one of 533
the reasons elicited is that it is supposed to attract
snakes. A few lizards are found in the houses and their 736
value in ridding the rooms of insects is recognised. In
winter most of the pests disappear, and their annoyance is
greatest in the warmest days of summer. A large percentage 649
of the townspeople do not consult the medical officer for 758
their ailments, and, coupled with the deficiency of infor-
mation in the hospital itself, it is thus difficult to
arrive at any exact answer to the question of health. In- 165
fant mortality appears to be high, but an individual who
passes adolescence seems to have excellent chances of
reaching old age. The number of men in the town vigorous 887
at sixty, seventy, and eighty years is surprising. Ba'uf
Effendi was considering a second marriage at sixty, to re-
place the son who had died (at the age of eleven "of the [761]
evil eye"), and Shakir Effendi led an extremely active
life at eighty-five, walking up and down the steep slope
of the town eight times each day. Dysentery troubles al- 164
most everyone, and there are a few cases of malaria every
summer. Most households have a series of remedies for 757
everyday complaints, but it cannot be denied that a 759
physician who commanded the respect of the townspeople
would find himself most welcome.

In concluding this section it may be observed that 177
there have been a number of changes in household life since

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4: Honeyo E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kard MA11

DEATH

Hospitals, ambulances, are to be found in provincial towns like Hadaliya and Sulaimaniyah and, of course, in the larger cities in the country. In Hadaliya I found that the male ward only had male nurses. In the villages there was no doctor, only, for example in Sargalu, a trained male nurse with a supply of medicaments for distribution[17]. In regard to the attitude to medical assistance, my interpreter's father refused to allow a doctor to be summoned or for any of the patients in the house to be taken by cab to see one, during the outbreak of Asiatic influenza in Sulaimaniyah in 1957. In the same house my interpreter's mother refused to seek medical aid for rheumatic pains in the back and possibly fever. One of the daughters stood on her back whilst she lay huddled up on the floor and massaged her in this way. A child in Tirqasra with fever, who was taken to the small hospital at Dokan on the following day, was the day previous embraced by an elderly woman and smeared over the whole body with freshly-churned butter.

The sick bed in the home is only used when the patient cannot stand up; even influenza patients in Sulaimaniyah were taken on evening visits to the neighbours. For headaches they were given a bandage round the forehead[18], and sufferers often went to sleep in the house where there were guests, re-appearing later in the evening. During the influenza epidemic, no measures were taken to isolate the eating and drinking utensils of the sick from those of the rest of the family. Spitting was much resorted to in the courtyard, on the clay roof and on the clay floor[19]. Broken arms and legs were ill-tended, grew together badly, resulting in mis-shapen limbs, cases of which I observed with small children both in Sulaimaniyah and Berkan. There was no snake serum in the villages. A harvester in Tirqasra and a boy in Balkha who were bitten by snakes were taken by mule and later by hired car or bus a long distance to hospital for treatment. Spraying with DDT was used against vermin in the part of Kurdistan I visited. There letters painted on the walls of houses indicated that this had been done. According to Wilkinson, this spraying is done annually in the villages[20].

Neither the sick nor the dying were isolated even if it was possible to arrange a sickroom in the home.

Burial. The deaths took place among adults in the homes I stayed in in Kurdistan, but, outside the mosque at Mirza Rostam I had an opportunity to study the two objects used for the washing and transportation of the dead. The one was an oblong, very large knee-high table with a very heavy top and thick legs on which the corpse was washed. This was kept out for three days in the home where death had taken place and was then returned to the mosque—an understandable arrangement as in this cultural pattern the table is not a settled institution, but an exception. By the side of this large wooden table stood a bier, an oblong, wooden cross with a flat base, low legs and two short carrying poles at each end. This also belonged to the mosque. On this the body, clad in an unsewn shroud and wrapped in the ceremonial, but without a coffin, was transported to the burial ground outside the town[21]. The same type is found in Arabia[22] and Egypt[23].

Two children's deaths, a little girl's and a little boy's, took place among the people I lived with. Even though it was a matter of a child's funeral I observed certain differences, which have their parallels in adult funerals. As soon as death had taken place the child was taken up from its cradle

4. Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kard MA11

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Fig. 61. Preparation for Ramadan gaan. The daughter standing on the bank of her mother. Sulaimaniyah.

and placed on a rug or small mattress on the floor. The children were 3 years and 4 months old, respectively. The little girl lay covered with a towel. No doctor was summoned to issue a death certificate. It was said that this is unnecessary in the case of small children. The death is notified later to the authorities. As the funeral was to take place the same day, one of the men of the house was sent to the city for a suitable piece of white cotton material for the ornaments, while the women of the house heated water for washing the corpse. This most include both the small wash, performed prior to prayer: hands, forearms, feet and a light smoothing of the hair on the head with a damp hand, and the big wash, which includes the whole body, so that the deceased achieves complete ritual purity[58]. The little girl had died in the neighbouring house to my interpreter's house in Sulaimaniyah, where I lived. It had originally been an ordinary Kurdish man's house, but had now declined into a slum building inhabited by several families. In the centre of the courtyard there was a reservoir from which the several families on the property fetched water for household purposes. This water, the doubtful cleanliness of which was possibly the cause of the little girl's illness and death, was not used for washing the corpse. Many petrol cans of good municipal water were fetched from my interpreter's house, where water was laid in. A big cauldron was put over a fire in the courtyard. On the floor in one of the rooms on the side of the dead child sat the mother, grandmother and aunt, mingling the child and lamenting its death. This death lament, an old heathen custom, has been retained although